

**Memorandum for: THE RECORD**DATE 86/02/11 *file*DOC NO EUR M86-20015OCR 3P&PD 1

This paper examines key Allied views of the latest Soviet arms control proposals, focusing on West German interest in an interim INF accord and Anglo-French concerns about Soviet efforts to forestall their nuclear modernization efforts. I hope you find it useful.

*1 - file*  
*1 - Source(s)*

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Attachment:  
EUR M86-20015

5 February 1986

**EUR A**

**Office of European Analysis  
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Central Intelligence Agency

Washington, D.C. 20505

7 February 1986

## NATO REACTIONS TO THE GORBACHEV PROPOSALS

## SUMMARY

NATO governments see the latest Soviet proposals as a shrewd effort to maximize pressure on the US SDI program and to hold out the prospects of zero INF in Europe. The Allies also suspect that Moscow's emphasis on complete nuclear disarmament is a new gambit to decouple US nuclear guarantees from Western Europe's defense and forestall British and French nuclear modernization. Nevertheless, many NATO members have pressed for early consultations to work out a joint response that will test whether Moscow is willing to make concessions needed to advance the prospects for negotiated agreements. [redacted]

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The West Germans are the most positive toward the Gorbachev proposals, although they fault Moscow's exclusion of Asian SS-20s from an INF agreement and its inattention to conventional forces. Bonn is most impressed with Soviet hints that an interim INF accord not linked to SDI might be possible and with Gorbachev's apparent endorsement of on-site verification -- a move it believes could facilitate agreements on nuclear testing and chemical weapons. Bonn wants an early Alliance response -- probably focused on reaching an interim INF accord -- in order

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to prevent Moscow giving the Social Democratic opposition new ammunition to attack the government's arms control policies during the election campaign this fall. [REDACTED]

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British and French officials see few if any positive elements in the Gorbachev proposals and are consulting closely with one another on how to keep their forces out of the INF talks. The French also want an exchange of views within NATO, in part to control the "unjustified optimism" of the West Germans. In addition, we believe Paris wants to prevent an Alliance position that suggests there is any merit in the Soviet proposals for complete nuclear disarmament. [REDACTED]

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The Gorbachev proposals so far have generated little official enthusiasm or public response in Belgium, the Netherlands, or Italy. Brussels and the Hague foresee complications to their future INF deployments if Moscow should make a strong pitch to their publics. The Italians see the deferral of UK/French nuclear reductions and the attention to verification measures as positive features but note the danger of decoupling the US from Western Europe. [REDACTED]  
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"It is no accident that a considerable proportion of the new Soviet initiatives are addressed directly to Europe. In efforts to achieve a sharp turn in favor of the policy of peace, Europe could have a special mission. This mission is building detente anew."

-- Mikhail Gorbachev, 15 January 1986

#### West German Interest

Bonn has told US officials that it wants an early Alliance discussion and a constructive response that goes beyond merely criticizing the new Soviet offer. Chancellery and Foreign Ministry officials see the Gorbachev proposals as directed primarily toward West German public opinion, and they appear to believe that Moscow has packaged its proposals to create problems for the government parties in the election next January. Bonn has placed special emphasis on Alliance examination of the first stage of the Soviet proposal dealing with INF and the apparent Gorbachev endorsement of new verification measures (including on-site inspection) for future arms control agreements:

- o According to West German arms control adviser Fred Ruth, Soviet negotiator Kvitsinskiy told West German officials in late January that an interim INF agreement does not need to be linked to an SDI ban. [redacted] a constructive Western25X1 approach might call for an interim INF agreement permitting some US missiles while simultaneously exploring a zero-zero option or Western terms. 25X1

West German officials consider the Soviet treatment of verification as the most promising aspect of the Gorbachev disarmament plan:

- o Fred Ruth [ ] believes the Soviets will now accept verification measures in a wider range of arms control areas than monitoring force reductions (e.g., chemical production facilities and confidence building measures in CDE). We believe the Foreign Ministry wants a positive Alliance response to these apparent concessions in order to hold Moscow to these positions. 25X1
- o In meetings with US officials in late January, Ruth, Foreign Minister Genscher, and opposition SPD leaders have emphasized the importance of Soviet acceptance in principle of on-site inspection of CW production facilities.
- o Some Bonn officials have also pointed to Soviet acceptance of permanent exit/entry points for MBFR monitoring as evidence of movement on verification, and they take seriously Moscow's statement that the extent of verification procedures will be related to the size of the arms reductions.
- o In early February West German NATO representatives also singled out Moscow's extension of on-site inspection to its nuclear test moratorium proposal as a positive development. [ ] 25X1

[ ] we believe Bonn clearly favors a Western response calling for a separate interim INF accord that also places constraints on Soviet SRINF forces.\* Although West German officials may hope that Moscow is prepared to be more flexible on the issue of third-party forces if there were no US INF in Europe, we believe Bonn has serious reservations about a final INF agreement that would remove all US INF systems from Europe. They would probably see such a result as exacerbating the problems of conventional imbalance in Europe and raising serious questions about US nuclear guarantees to the Federal Republic. [ ] 25X1

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\*West German representatives in NATO said in early February that a separate interim INF agreement could be based on the November 1985 US proposals -- calling for equal global warhead ceilings for US and Soviet INF missiles that might allow for 140 INF launchers for each side in Europe and proportionate reductions in Soviet SS-20s in Asia.

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[redacted]

Bonn probably would also want a Western response to seek further clarification of Moscow's positions on MBFR and CW verification. In recent NATO meetings, West German representatives expressed the view that Moscow's responses to the latest Western MBFR offer carry a positive tone and that Soviet readiness to identify CW production facilities and develop procedures for their destruction is a new development. On nuclear testing issues, Genscher and Ruth have told US officials that Moscow's willingness to discuss on-site inspection places the US in a weak position to refuse to join in the Soviet call for a test moratorium. Kohl and other Chancellery officials, on the other hand, have not taken a strong position on the nuclear testing issue and probably do not endorse Genscher's views. [redacted]

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### British and French Criticisms

British and French official responses have been low-key and predictably negative. The Thatcher government is worried that the Soviet offer will fuel domestic pressure to put the Trident modernization program on the bargaining table, just as the Mitterrand government sees the proposals aimed at halting the French nuclear modernization program. London is scheduled to begin construction of its first Trident submarine this year, and Paris is already refitting its SLBM force with new MIRVed M4 warheads. Between now and the mid-1990s, British and French nuclear forces are to grow from 178 launchers (290 warheads) to 194 launchers (930 warheads). Foreign Ministers Howe and Dumas announced last Friday that while they were encouraged by Moscow's abandonment of its call for direct compensation for British and French nuclear forces in an INF agreement, they had strong reservations about freezing their modernization programs. Both believe the appearance of Soviet concessions will portray Paris and London as "stumbling blocks" to an INF accord and increase Allied pressure on them to constrain their modernization efforts. [redacted]

British and French officials continue to argue that major reductions in US and Soviet strategic forces must precede any negotiations on their forces. Dumas, in his remarks at the CDE conference in early February, elaborated that even if this condition were fulfilled, French nuclear reductions would still be contingent on agreement not to improve strategic defenses and on redressing the conventional (and chemical) force imbalance in Europe. [redacted]

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The British have not responded officially, but they have promised US officials a complete analysis of the Soviet proposals this week. Within NATO circles, British representatives have said that the Soviets appear willing to consider both a zero-zero option and a separate interim INF accord, and therefore Moscow's position on compensation for UK and French nuclear forces appears ambiguous.

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Although they do not expect the Soviets to drop their call for freezing French and British forces during the first phase of their plan, the British see this as an opening that the Alliance should pursue vigorously. [REDACTED]

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The French Foreign Ministry has already told US diplomats that the Gorbachev proposals contain nothing new, they fail to deal adequately with Asian SS-20 deployments and SDI research, and their verification proposals are "illusory." The French repeated their concerns in recent NATO meetings, where French Ambassador Curien criticized the proposals as designed to maintain Soviet military superiority over the Alliance at each stage of the reductions. In addition, Paris appears concerned about the "unjustified optimism" of some Allied officials like Genscher and Ruth. The French, like the West Germans, want an exchange of views at NATO this spring, where they probably hope to cool West German enthusiasm and gain NATO support for rejecting a freeze on their nuclear forces. In view of long standing French support for nuclear deterrence, we expect Paris also will emphasize that NATO should be wary of endorsing any superpower proposal -- be it the Soviet plan for complete nuclear disarmament or the US SDI program -- that aims at reducing the importance of nuclear weapons. [REDACTED]

### Italy

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Italian official and public reactions have been low-key, reflecting a general belief that Soviet proposals ignore important West European security concerns. Foreign Ministry officials have noted that the proposals suggest some US concessions in exchange for vague Soviet promises, but they hasten to add that Prime Minister Craxi is reluctant to criticize the proposals too soon. In our view, Craxi probably is looking toward the Gorbachev visit to Italy this spring and does not wish to get out ahead of the other Allies in noting the drawbacks to the new offer. Also, according to the US Embassy, Rome is preoccupied with budget debates and the possibility of a cabinet shuffle. [REDACTED]

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In general, Italian officials see many traps in the Soviet proposals, in particular the danger that the zero-option would weaken the coupling of US nuclear guarantees to Western Europe's defense. Rome is taking some comfort in the fact that Moscow still insists on eliminating INF systems only in Europe, which will reduce the possible wedge-driving effects of Moscow's INF offer. Like some West German officials, the Italians have credited the far-reaching Soviet plan to Gorbachev's new dynamism. Senior Foreign Ministry officials also echo Bonn's assessment that the most positive aspects of the Soviet offer appear to be Moscow's willingness to defer UK/French nuclear reductions and its more open attitude on verification. [REDACTED]

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### The Netherlands

Although the Dutch government has promised to examine the Soviet arms control initiative in NATO forums, so far it has stuck by its position on INF deployment. The Hague has refused to consider opposition calls to delay ratification of the INF basing agreement with the US until the Gorbachev proposals -- especially those relating to INF -- become clearer. The Dutch government's position regarding INF was strengthened last week when opposition parliamentarians, hoping to discredit the Hague's assurances on control of cruise missiles based in the Netherlands, found no strong grounds for criticizing the government following meetings with senior NATO officials. [REDACTED]

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While Dutch ratification of the INF basing agreement appears to be on track for approval this spring, various factors could delay -- or prevent -- later INF deployments:

- o Although the Hague has stated many times that INF will not be discussed during the Prime Minister's forthcoming visit to Moscow, we believe the temptation to probe into Soviet flexibility on INF is strong -- particularly if domestic interest in the Soviet disarmament plan grows.
- o The Dutch do not plan to deploy any cruise missiles until 1988, leaving ample time for new events -- like the election in May -- to interfere. At the moment, however, the government parties appear somewhat stronger in the polls than they were in November when they announced their decision to deploy cruise missiles.
- o The Hague also is concerned that Washington might undercut the Dutch INF position by announcing changes in the US policy to respect the limits set by the ABM and SALT II treaties. Foreign Minister van den Broek, in a recent meeting with US officials, emphasized that "further abrogation" of SALT II would have drastic consequences for Dutch public opinion. [REDACTED]

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For the moment, we believe Moscow's proposals have not had a tangible effect on public opinion or official policy. And Dutch representatives at NATO have said that future Alliance consultations should be used to demonstrate to Western publics NATO's serious consideration of the Soviet proposals rather than to formulate specific counterproposals. If, however, Moscow were to elaborate on its new INF positions and give the Dutch reason to believe that an early INF agreement were possible, we believe this could rekindle anti-INF sentiment. Also, Soviet hints of early progress at Geneva might encourage Dutch officials to believe that no cruise missiles



need be deployed in the Netherlands even under an interim INF accord that permitted a limited number of US cruise missiles to remain in Western Europe. This belief would create frictions with other Allies -- especially the Belgians -- who demand that any US deployments permitted under an INF agreement be shared among the five basing countries. [REDACTED]

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### Belgium

Like the Hague, Brussels has been careful not to overemphasize the significance of the Soviet proposal and does not want to give much lip-service to a Soviet plan for global nuclear disarmament that could undercut Western INF policies. Foreign Ministry officials have told US diplomats privately that the West should be careful to treat each stage of Moscow's 15-year proposal separately and give priority to the first step that focuses on the INF and START talks in Geneva. Belgian political parties -- with the exception of the Flemish Socialists -- have taken little notice of Moscow's initiative. However, Foreign Minister Tindemans expressed hope in a recent interview that an agreement on INF could be reached that would make additional cruise missile deployments in Belgium unnecessary. Although Brussels has stood fast on INF, we expect the new Gorbachev proposals will stiffen its resolve not to accelerate the basing schedule. [REDACTED]

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EUROPEAN ASPECTS OF GORBACHEV'S ARMS PROPOSALS

FIRST STAGE (five to eight years)

Reach and implement a decision to eliminate all US and Soviet INF missiles in Europe.

US pledges not to supply strategic or INF missiles to other countries.

UK and French pledges not to build up their nuclear arms.

SECOND STAGE (begins no later than 1990 and lasts five to seven years)

Other nuclear powers (including UK and France) pledge to freeze all nuclear arms and not to deploy them in other countries.

US and USSR continue reductions from the first stage and implement further measures to eliminate INF and to freeze tactical nuclear arms (with a range of up to 1,000 kilometers).

THIRD STAGE (begins no later than 1995 and lasts until the year 2000)

Eliminate all remaining nuclear arms.